

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 04355 201414Z  
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07  
NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 /050 W  
-----201949Z 026075 /44

R 200755Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 579  
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS LAGOS 4355

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, RH, UK, NI, US  
SUBJECT: EDITORIAL CRITICIZES OWEN INITIATIVE

1. IN FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL ENTITLED "UNNECESSARY JOURNEY,"  
GOVERNMENT-OWNED /NEW NIGERIA/ APRIL 19 WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF  
BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN'S EFFORTS TO FIND A WAY TO  
ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE.
2. BEREN TEXT: "ARRIVING AT HEATHROW AIRPORT FROM LAGOS AT THE  
END OF A WEEK-LONG TOUR OF AFRICA IN YET ANOTHER SEARCH FOR A SOLUTIO  
N  
TO THE ZIMBABWE PROBLEM, THE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY, DR. DAVID  
OWEN, IN AN INTERVIEW, SAID THAT HE WAS UNDER NO ILLUSION THAT IT  
WOULD BE EASY TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE IN  
ZIMBABWE. ISN'T THAT ABSOLUTELY MARVELOUS?

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POOR DR. OWEN, THERE HE STANDS HOLDING A HOT POTATO WITHOUT  
KNOWING WHAT TO DO WITH IT. OUR ADVICE TO HIM IS TO SIMPLY DROP IT.  
WILSON, HOME, HEATH, CALLAGHAN AND THE LATE CROSLAND HAD HAD THEIR  
FINGERS BURNT HOLDING THE SAME HOT POTATO. ALL THAT HAS SO FAR  
EMERGED IS THAT THE STRENGTH OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT  
TO THEIR KITH AND KIN IN ZIMBABWE HAS ONLY GROWN DURING THE PAST  
TWELVE YEARS OF SMITH'S INTRANSIGENCE RATHER THAN DIMINISHED. SO

WHAT USEFUL PURPOSE WAS DR. OWEN'S TRIP SUPPOSED TO SERVE?  
WE HAVE GROWN TIRED OF ATTEMPTS TO PULL THE WOOL OVER OUR EYES.  
EVERY POSSIBLE CHANCE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO SMITH TO REACH AN ACCORD  
WITH ZIMBABWEAN NATIONALISTS ON THE BASIS OF MAJORITY RULE AND HE  
HAD CONSISTENTLY AND OBSTINATELY BALKED AT IT.  
FROM THE TIME THE LAST SERIES OF TALKS FOLDED AFTER A COUPLE OF  
MONTHS OF EMPTY RHETORIC IN GENEVA AND THE CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN,  
IVOR RICHARD, LIMPED OFF ON A LAST ROUND OF FRUITLESS DISCUSSIONS  
BEFORE FINDING HIMSELF IN AN INEVITABLE CUL-DE-SAC, IT HAD BECOME  
PAINFULLY FINALLY CLEAR TO ALL AFRICAN INTERESTS THAT THERE WAS NO  
LONGER ANY NEED FOR ANY FURTHER TALKS OVER ZIMBABWE. TOO MUCH HOT  
AIR HAD ALREADY BEEN EXPANDED. MAJORITY RULE THERE SHALL BE IN  
ZIMBABWE, BUT NOT AS A RESULT OF ANY ASSISTANCE FROM WHITEHALL.  
OTHER MEANS EXIST.

WE WONDER WHY DR. OWEN THOUGHT IT NECESSARY TO UNDERTAKE THIS  
USELESS TRIP." END TEXT.  
EASUM

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, POLITICAL SITUATION, MINISTERIAL VISITS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** EDITORIAL CRITICIZES OWEN INITIATIVE  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PDEV, RH, UK, NI, US, (OWEN, DAVID)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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